



RSU 63 engages all students in high quality academic and co-curricular programs in a safe and supportive learning environment so they may succeed in school and reach their fullest potential in life.

RSU 63 Outline for Returning to School 2020-2021 School Year

Presented to the RSU 63 Board of Directors
July 27, 2020



Planning Priorities

- Keep the **health and safety** of students, staff, and community the primary consideration
- Provide **At-School Instruction** for as many students as possible as quickly (and safely) as possible
- Build in **flexibility** to address many scenarios while maintaining **consistency** whenever feasible



Levels of Instruction: **Red**, **Yellow**, & **Green**



Red

- Remote Instruction for all students, 5 days per week

Yellow

- At-School Instruction 2 days per week (Mondays and Wednesdays) for approximately 50% of the students
- At-School Instruction 2 days per week (Tuesdays and Thursdays) for the other 50% of the students
- Remote Instruction for all students on Fridays and the days they are not At-School

Green

- At-School Instruction 4 days per week (Mondays through Thursdays) for all of the students
- Remote Instruction for all students on Fridays



All Levels of Instruction: **Red**, **Yellow**, & **Green**



- Maine CDC, DHHS, and DOE Guidelines will be followed
- Students and staff will be in consistent cohort groups (pods, homerooms, grade levels)
- In-person or video interactions with teacher(s) every day
- Assignments for Remote days posted every Sunday
- Remote Instruction on Fridays
- A tablet or computer and internet access for every student
 - Tablet option for Pre-K
 - Tablets for Kindergarten and Grade 1
 - Chromebooks for Grades 2 through 6
 - MacBooks for Grades 7 and 8
- Social-emotional and food support provided

CDC = Center for Disease Control and Prevention; DHHS = Department of Health and Human Services; DOE = Department of Education



Green Does Not Mean “Back to Normal”



In order to provide At-School Instruction, Maine CDC and DOE requirements must be followed. These include:

- symptom screening before boarding a bus or entering a school
- physical distancing
- face masks/coverings
- frequent hand hygiene
- additional cleaning and disinfecting



Designation by County: **Red**, **Yellow**, & **Green**

- The Maine CDC and DHHS will identify each county as **Red**, **Yellow**, or **Green** every two weeks beginning Friday, July 31st.
- Local conditions and safety factors may require RSU 63 schools to be at a different level than the county designation.
 - For example, if we have a positive COVID-19 case in one of our schools, that school would need to be closed, and All Remote (**Red**) Instruction would begin.



Returning to School

- If Penobscot County is designated as **Red**, we will distribute tablets and computers as soon as possible and begin Remote Instruction on Wednesday, August 26th.
- If Penobscot County is designated as **Yellow** or **Green**, *RSU 63 will begin the school year using the **Yellow** schedule starting At-School Instruction for students in Pod A on Wednesday, August 26th and At-School Instruction for students in Pod B on Thursday August 27th.*
 - We need time for all our staff to work with small pods of students to teach, implement, and refine the new procedures.
 - If Penobscot County is designated as **Green**, we will work to have as many students and grade levels as feasible move from the **Yellow** schedule to the **Green** schedule as quickly (and safely) as possible.



Returning to School

Students in Kindergarten through Grade 8 are being placed in three homerooms. Each homeroom is being divided into two “Pods.”

- Initially, Pod A will participate in At-School Instruction on Mondays and Wednesdays, with Remote Instruction on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Fridays.
- Pod B will participate in At-School Instruction on Tuesdays and Thursdays, with Remote Instruction on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays.

Students in Pre-Kindergarten are being placed in four groups (Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays).

Pre-Kindergarten students will attend school one full day per week at the **Yellow** Level and two full days per week (when safe and feasible) at the **Green** Level. Parents who wish to pick up their Pre-Kindergarten student before the end of the full day may do so.

Some students and grades may be able to attend school four days per week earlier than other students and grades.



Special Considerations

- Accommodations will be made for students who have IEP plans, 504 plans, and other learning risks. These could include increased At-School days ahead of other students.
- RSU 63 will provide Remote Instruction and other accommodations to students who are determined to be medically fragile and not able to participate in At-School Instruction.
- During **Yellow** and **Green** Levels of Instruction, we will also offer a Remote Only option upon request. However, remote support during At-School days will not be the same as All Remote Instruction when we are all at the **Red** Level.
- Increased At-School days ahead of other students will be considered for students without internet who live in locations where hot spots do not work.



RSU 63 administrators and subcommittees continue to work hard to determine the best plans for our students, staff, and community. In addition to reviewing and using the information from our staff and parent surveys and listening to input from a variety of individuals, we are frequently consulting with health officials, lawyers, and other organizations such as Maine School Management Association, DOE, and the Maine Education Association.

*These times are really difficult and we recognize it is hard to be patient - especially with so many anticipated changes and unknown factors. We understand parents, students, and staff need details and answers to many questions. We will share more information as soon as we can.
We promise!*



Timeline for Returning to School

Week of July 27th – 31st

- RSU 63 **Outline** for Returning to School shared with staff & parents
- Assignment changes communicated with teachers and ed techs
- Childcare needs shared with childcare providers

Friday, July 31st: Maine DHHS and CDC will post initial school advisory designations (**Red**, **Yellow**, **Green**) by county. These will be updated every two weeks.

Week of August 3rd – 7th: Pod/Homeroom assignments and weekly schedules will be shared with parents. Students who are in the same households will be placed in the same Pod. (There will be some exceptions to this such as Pre-Kindergarten and Life Skills students.)



Timeline for Returning to School (Cont.)

Week of August 10th – 14th: Detailed RSU 63 **Guidelines** for Returning to School shared with RSU 63 Board of Directors, staff, and parents

Tuesday, August 11th at 6:30pm: Public Forum – RSU 63's Plans for Returning to School (video meeting, link will be posted)

Thursday, August 13th at 6:30pm: Panel Discussion – Physical and Emotional Health Considerations for Returning to School (video meeting, link will be posted)



Timeline for Returning to School (Cont.)

Thursday, August 20th: Teachers return to work

Monday, August 24th: Hourly staff return to work

Monday, August 24th and Tuesday, August 25th:
Video “Open House” sessions will be held for each grade level. Times and links will be posted.

Wednesday, August 26th: Instruction Begins!



RSU 63 Staff

- When health and medical conditions permit, our staff will be working in our facilities.
- Teachers and educational technicians will work in pairs with specific groups of students (pods, homerooms, grade levels).
 - During At-School Instruction, Pre-K to Grade 5 students will stay in their pods (or homerooms) with two educators.
 - During At-School Instruction, students in Grades 6 through 8 will remain in their pods (or homerooms). Educators will be assigned to one grade level (6, 7, or 8). Math, Science, Social Studies, and English Language Arts teachers will rotate between the three classrooms at their grade level.



RSU 63 Staff

- Our school counselors, speech & language pathologists, and occupational therapist have not been assigned to a homeroom. This will allow them to provide instruction and support to a broader range of students.
 - These services will be provided through telehealth, video conferencing, and/or in-person with an individual student or students from the same pod/homeroom.
 - Surfaces and materials will be disinfected between sessions.
- Our composite/life skills teachers will remain with their homeroom students.



RSU 63 Staff

- Our resource room and literacy teachers will be with a homeroom group. They will provide specialized instruction directly to students in that homeroom and to other students through video conferences. They will plan lessons as well as provide resources and consultation for students in other homerooms. Ed Tech IIs and teachers will help deliver this instruction.
- Our librarian as well as our art, music, physical education, and Spanish teachers will be with a homeroom group. They will plan lessons and post student assignments for Fridays. These teachers will provide resources and feedback to students.



RSU 63 Staff

- Four substitutes have been pre-arranged for At-School days throughout the first trimester.
 - 1 for Eddington, 1 for Holden, and 2 for Holbrook
 - This allows the substitutes to be trained and become familiar with our new procedures, teachers, and students.
 - If we do not need to place the substitute in a homeroom because a teacher or ed tech is absent, the substitute will help in other ways (such as resource room or literacy support).
- We are working on hiring substitutes for educators who will be out for medical reasons.



RSU 63 Staff

- During **Green** and **Yellow** Levels of Instruction, our teachers will be with students for the entire school day, Monday through Thursday (other than lunch and breaks). This maximizes direct instruction on days students are at school.
- On Fridays (when health and medical conditions permit),
 - teachers will be at school for meetings, planning, preparing, and providing feedback; and
 - ed techs who are interested will work Fridays when work is available.
- We are scheduling interested staff to help with the additional cleaning and disinfecting.



Thank You!

I am very proud of the way our students, parents, staff, and community members have responded to this crisis. This pride carries through to this Outline for Returning to School which represents our best thinking to date on how we intend to open our RSU 63 schools this fall. Our plan provides quality At-School and Remote Instruction while taking steps to protect the health of our students, staff, and community. While the number of COVID-19 cases in Maine is low, our vulnerability is high. As we implement new procedures and learn more about COVID-19, I anticipate we will need to refine and revise our plans. Thank you for your patience as we figure this out together.

Sincerely,

Susan M. Smith

RSU 63 Superintendent/Director of Curriculum and Instruction